Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Australians embrace life-long learning

Over one-third (4.2 million or 38%) of Australians aged 25 to 64 years participated in formal or non-formal learning in the year to June 2007, according to a survey run for the first time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Almost three-quarters (74%) of Australians aged 25 to 64 years participated in informal learning.

In the 2006-07 survey on people undertaking formal learning (e.g. degree/certificate qualification), non-formal learning (e.g. typing course) and informal learning (e.g. reading reference manuals) the ABS found that management and commerce were the most popular formal (28%) and non-formal (25%) learning areas.

The main reason Australians take up formal learning is "to get a better job or promotion" (28%), and the main reason Australians take up non-formal learning is because it was a requirement of their job (36%).

Full-time workers were more likely to have participated in some forms of learning than persons not in the labour force (84% compared to 62%).

Other survey findings include:

- Employed people who participated in formal or non-formal learning were more likely to be professionals (29%), clerical and administrative workers (15%) and managers (14%).
- Younger people (25-29 years) were more likely to participate in formal learning (25% compared to 3% for 60-64 year olds).
- A Certificate lll or IV was the most common (26%) course level for people participating in formal learning.
- More women participated in formal learning (13% of women compared to 11% of men). However more men participated in non-formal learning (32% compared to 29%) and informal learning (76% compared to 73%).
- The Northern Territory had the highest proportion of people participating in formal or non-formal learning (51%) followed by the Australian Capital Territory (50%). The Australian Capital Territory had the highest proportion of people participating in informal learning (84%) followed by Western Australia (79%).

For more details see *Adult Learning, Australia, 2006-07* (cat. no. 4229.0).

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